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SUBJECT: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON PAKISTAN

1. ON MAY 16 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IN LONDON ISSUED A 92-PAGE REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVANCE IN PAKISTAN UP TO 31 JANUARY 1977. THE DEPARTMENT WILL POUCH A COPY TO THE EMBASSY AND WOULD APPRECIATE AN ASSESSMENT OF ITS ACCURACY AND IMPARTIALITY.

2. EXCERPTS FROM NEWS RELEASE WHICH ACCOMPANIED ISSUANCE OF REPORT FOLLOW:

"AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TODAY (MONDAY 16 MAY 1977) PUBLISHED A REPORT, BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF AN AI MISSION TO PAKISTAN 23 APRIL - 12 MAY 1976, WHICH DETAILS THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION PREVAILING IN PAKISTAN UP TO 31 JANUARY 1977.
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PAGE 02 STATE 125420

THE 92-PAGE REPORT EXPRESSES AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S DEEP CONCERN AT THE DETENTION, TRIAL PROCEDURES AND TREATMENT OF GOVERNMENT OPPONENTS IN PAKISTAN EVEN BEFORE THE 7 MARCH GENERAL ELECTION.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL STRESSED TODAY THAT ITS REPORT WAS NOT A RESPONSE TO THE POST-ELECTION SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY.

THE REPORT INCLUDES THE FINDINGS OF MISSION DELEGATES PROFESSOR MUMTAZ SOYSAL, A TURKISH CONSTITUTIONAL LAWYER AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF AI'S INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AND YVONNE TERLINGEN, A DUTCH LAWYER FROM AI'S INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, AND COVERS THE PERIOD UP TO 31 JANUARY 1977. THE REPORT WAS PRESENTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN ON 31 MARCH, WITH THE REQUEST THAT ANY COMMENTS BE MADE BEFORE 9 MAY. NO COMMENT HAS YET BEEN RECEIVED.

DESPITE THE STATEMENT BY PAKISTAN'S ATTORNEY GENERAL ON 28 OCTOBER 1976 THAT THERE WERE ONLY NINE POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE COUNTRY, AI ESTIMATED AT THAT TIME THAT AT LEAST SEVERAL THOUSAND POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE DETAINED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF PAKISTAN UNDER DIFFERENT LEGAL CHARGES. MOST OF THEM ARE DETAINED WITHOUT TRIAL.

THE REPORT:

-- DESCRIBES VARIOUS CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL AMENDMENTS PASSED SINCE THE EMERGENCY WAS DECLARED ON 23 NOVEMBER 1971 WHICH "HAVE DEPRIVED THE HIGHER JUDICIARY OF THEIR PRINCIPAL MEANS OF EFFECTIVELY AND SPEEDILY REMEDYING VIOLATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES";

-- EXAMINES VARIOUS LEGAL PRODECURES WHICH ALLOW FOR INDEFINITE DETENTION FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS AND THEIR TRIAL BEFORE SPECIAL TRIBUNALS AND COURTS, SOME OF WHICH MAY BE HELD IN CAMERA, AND WHERE THE ORDINARY RIGHTS OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 125420

ACCUSED ARE ABRIDGED. SUCH PROCEDURES "FALL FAR SHORT OF INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS REFERRED TO IN ARTICLE 10 OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS".

THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DESCRIBED IN AI'S REPORT OCCURRED BEFORE THE 7 MARCH GENERAL ELECTION. THE EVENTS OF THE LAST TWO MONTHS HAVE BEEN MARKED BY THE LARGE SCALE ARREST OF POLITICAL OPPONENTS. ALMOST ALL THE LEADERS OF THE COMBINED NATIONAL ALLIANCE OPPOSITION ARE AT PRESENT IN DETENTION. IN ADDITION TO THOUSANDS OF POLITICAL WORKERS - WHO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED DURING THE OPPOSITION CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE CAMPAIGN FOR NEW GENERAL ELECTIONS TO BE HELD - MANY LAWYERS, JOURNALISTS AND STUDENTS HAVE ALSO BEEN ARRESTED SINCE THE WRITING OF THIS REPORT". CHRISTOPHER

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